

- 18 -

CLAIMS

1. An electronic device for viewing images (100) comprising a viewing surface (120), said viewing surface (120) being substantially continuous and having  
5 a plurality of directions of frontal observation distributed continuously in an angular field of observation.

2. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said angular field of observation is no smaller  
10 than 180°.

3. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said angular field of observation is substantially equal to 360°.

4. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised  
15 in that said viewing surface (120) is a surface with single curvature.

5. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said viewing surface (120) is a surface with double curvature.

20 6. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said viewing surface is a convex surface.

7. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said viewing surface (120) has, at least in part, cylindrical shape.

25 8. A device as claimed in claim 7, characterised in that said viewing surface (120) is substantially cylindrical.

9. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said viewing surface (120) is constituted by at  
30 least a flexible, curved viewing element (I through VI).

10. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said viewing surface (120) comprises a plurality of viewing elements (I a VI).

- 19 -

11. A device as claimed in claim 10, characterised in that it comprises a module (244) for processing video signals able to be fed with an incoming video stream (242) and capable of dividing said stream into a plurality of sub-streams, each of which is sent to one of said display elements of said plurality (I through VI).

12. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that said viewing surface (120) is obtained with a LED, OLED or TFT viewing structure.

13. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that it has associated therewith a processing module (244) capable of being fed with a stream of video signals representing a panoramic image having an extension in the direction of the width, said processing module (244) being capable of varying the position of representation of said panoramic image on said viewing surface (120) with a sliding effect of said panoramic image in the direction of said width.

14. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that it comprises, associated to said viewing surface (120), at least a loudspeaker (150) for the reproduction of an audio signal.

15. A device as claimed in claim 14, characterised in that it comprises a plurality of loudspeakers (150) distributed in said angular field.

16. A device as claimed in claim 15, characterised in that it comprises a display module (240) for driving the viewing of an image on said viewing surface (102) and an audio reproduction module (250) for reproducing respective audio signals through the loudspeakers of said plurality (150).

17. A device as claimed in claim 16, characterised in that said display module (240) and said audio reproduction module (250) are operatively connected to

- 20 -

convey to each of the loudspeakers (150) of said plurality a respective audio signal referred to the portion of image displayed in a portion of said viewing surface (102) adjacent to said loudspeaker (150).

5        18. A device as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that it comprises an imaging unit (110) for capturing panoramic images.

19. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised in that said imaging unit comprises anamorphic optics  
10 (110).

20. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised in that it is configured to reproduce on said viewing surface (120) the images captured by said imaging unit (110).

15        21. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised in that said imaging unit (110) is located in remote position relative to said display unit (120).

22. A device as claimed in claim 21, characterised in that said imaging unit (110) is connected to said  
20 device (100) by means of a telecommunication channel.

23. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised in that said imaging unit (110) and said viewing surface (120) are mounted on a common support (130).

24. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised  
25 in that said imaging unit (110) and said viewing surface (120) have a common main axis ( $X_{110}$ ).

25. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised in that said imaging unit (110) is, at least in part, located in an inner position relative to said viewing  
30 surface (120).

26. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised in that said imaging unit (110) is located in a distanced position relative to said viewing surface (120).

- 21 -

27. A device as claimed in claim 18, characterised in that it comprises at least a network interface (260, 280) configured to:

- transmit to a homologous device the panoramic  
5 images captured by said imaging unit (110), and
- receive from said homologous device image signals to be displayed on said viewing surface (120).

28. A device as claimed in claim 27, characterised in that said device comprises at least an interface  
10 (260, 280) configured to allow communication with said homologous device by means of a communication network.

29. A device as claimed in claim 28, characterised in that said communication network is selected in the group constituted by a wide area network such as the  
15 Internet and a WLAN network.

30. A device as claimed in claim 28, characterised in that said at least one interface is configured to allow a wireless communication.

31. A videoconference facility comprising at least  
20 a device as claimed in any of the claims 27 through 30.

32. A videoconference network comprising at least a first and a second device as claimed in any of the claims 27 through 30, capable of connecting with each other.

25 33. A method for viewing images, characterised in that it comprises the operations of

- generating a stream of video data (260) representative of a panoramic image,
- providing a viewing device as claimed in any of  
30 the claims 1 through 30, and
- feeding said stream of data to said viewing device, causing said panoramic image to be displayed on said viewing surface (120) of said device (100).